Accidents at Bagdigi mines at Dhanbad

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SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of mining personnel of Bharat Cooking Coal Ltd. including some of managerial rank, got trapped on 2nd February, 2001 inside the Bagdigi mines at Dhanbad in the State of Jharkhand and are feared to have died;

(b) if so, the details of the incident;

(c) whether it is a fact that *prima facie* the Bagdigi coal mine disaster has been found to be attributable *inter alia* to neglect of the basic safety norms in the mines by the authorities in BCI;

(d) the details of actions taken to fix accountability for the disaster;

(e) the preventive steps taken/proposed to be taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents; and

(f) what are details of rescue and relief operations undertaken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) and (b) On 2.2.2001 at about 12.30 P.M. while the development of 7 seam in Bagdigi Colliery under Lodna area was in progress within the leasehold area of Bagdigi towards Joyrampur Colliery, Level-III heading of 7 seam of Bagdigi Colliery joined with 15 level waterlogged old working of Joyrampur Colliery resulting in inundation of developed galleries of

7 seam of Bagdigi Colliery. There was a sudden inrush of water in the workings of Bagdigi where 30 persons including manager and one Assistant Manager were trapped. Out of 30 persons, 29 bodies were recovered and one person Shri Salim Ansari was rescued alive from Bagdigi.

(c) and (d) A Court of Enquiry headed by a sitting Judge of the Jharkhand High Court has been set up under Section 24 of the Mines Act. pending detailed investigation, the agent of Bagdigi Colliery, Shri A. K. Sengupta, the former surveyor Shri R. N. Kundu and the present surveyor Shri R. C. Das had been put under suspension.

(e) The following steps have been taken to prevent such mishap:—

1. A Committee consisting of senior officers has been constituted in each area, who will inspect the mines of other area to ascertain the danger to the working districts and other workings of the mines due to inundation from surface as well as underground waters from the different areas of the same mine or from the neighbouring mines and also to ascertain the danger of influx of noxious toxic gases as well as fire damp into the working districts or other workings either from the sealed off area of the same mine or of the other mines. Also, directions have been given to get all risk prone mines re-surveyed.

2. Three outside experts were appointed to conduct 3rd round of safety audit to examine all aspects of safety in depth including existing provisions and recommend precautions. Their report has been circulated to all collieries and areas for implementation.

(f) The following are the details of relief and rescue operations undertaken:—

1. Emergency control rooms were immediately established at Bagdigi, Joyrampur and Co. Hqrs. under the overall charge of senior officers to function round the clock. Control rooms were also established at the Headquarters of all the subsidiary companies, CIL Hqrs. and at Delhi to deal with the situation on a war footing.

2. The services of rescue station, Dhansar were immediately requisitioned and rescue teams were formed on the spot to deal with the situation.

3. It was decided to have a multi pronged strategy to deal with the situation with the following objectives :

(i) Search for all possible survivors upto the waterlogged workings.

(ii) Start dewatering operations from Joyrampur and Bagdigi by rushing in pumps and pipes from sister collieries and companies.

(iii) Drilling operations from VIII seam to VII seam in the rise side of the panel to provide oxygen to any probable survivors who may have taken shelter in the rise side air pockets.

(iv) Establishment of an escape route to the workers of Bagdigi from Joyrampur side.

(v) Requisitioning the services of Naval underwater divers to search for air pockets and survivors in advance of the dewatering operations. The initial search operations were carried out by Naval Divers who were air lifted from Delhi and reached the site on 4.2.2001. An additional team was also rushed from Vishakapatnam and reached the site on 5.2.2001. These divers carried out four sorties and searched the galleries and air pockets between 2L and 1L on the rise side of the panel but did not succeed in locating any persons in the places where they searched.

(vi) After a part of the dewatering operations were over a search team first located Shri Salim Ansari alone in 3rd dip between 1L and 2L.

(vii) The remaining 29 bodies have been recovered and handed over to the next of kin after postmortem.

4. To ensure effective implementation of relief work and care of affected families, one Nodal Officer was made responsible for every three families. These Nodal Officers were provided independent vehicles for easy movement of relatives of the affected persons.

5. The services of Doctors were also requisitioned for giving medical aid to families.

6. Settlement of all dues of the affected workers was done immediately both by cash/cheque.

7. An average payment of Rs. 8 lakhs (approx.) per person has

been made to the next of kin of the affected workers which includes *ex-gratia* payment of Rs. 1,25,000/- dues under Workmen's compensation Act, *ex-gratia* payment as per NCWA live cover scheme, payment under benevolent fund scheme, funeral and relief expenses, due gratuity, leave wages, LTD and LLTC.

8. It was also decided in Central Consultative Committee Meeting of BCCL held on 14.2.2001 that Rs. 75,000/- contribution from employees salary would be given to the affected persons.

9. Job to one dependant of each deceased has been given.

Accident prone coal mines

2707. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the 'Accident prone coal mines', in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that no study to ascertain the accident prone mines has been carried out though a large number of people had been killed in coal mines in the past few decades;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether the DGMS has recommended closure of several coal mines which are unsafe and if so, the details thereof.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) and (b) Certain mines are classified as 'Accident Prone' after a statistical exercise conducted by the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) based on the accident statistics of each coal mine for the previous five years. This is purely a statistical exercise to improve the safety standard of coal mining in the country by identifying some mines of each company for special attention. Special efforts are then made to bring the mine out of the accident prone list.